



Beauty Marks Leader Guide

By Tracy Grindle

Opening Show and Tell

We all have scars. If you're comfortable sharing, show your group a physical scar you have and tell about it. If you prefer to share about an emotional scar, please do so.

Opening Prayer: Healing Savior, thank You for helping our scars mend. You are with us every step of the way, no matter how long it takes to recover. Guide our thoughts and draw us closer to You and each other. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Who comes to mind when you think of pain and scars, and then beautiful triumph? Jesus would be the perfect example. Who else from the Bible jumps into your thoughts? [Naomi, Job, Paul, Bartimaeus, Lepers, The Twelve Disciples, Elijah, etc.](#)

Did anyone say Mephibosheth? No? Well, let's have a look. (Feel free to call him M; it's not easy to repeat that name!) Please read **2 Samuel 4:4**. What physical scars did Jonathan's young son have? [crippled feet](#)

[2 Samuel 4:4 Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled. His name was Mephibosheth.](#)

The emotional scars would have been substantial as well. His father and grandfather were killed at the same time, when the little guy was just five. It was common practice for the family of murdered leaders to also be killed. How terrifying for a young child to be escaping for his life and permanently disabled in the process. What kind of life could he have had, in exile and without family? [Answers will vary.](#)

We catch up with Mephibosheth in **2 Samuel 9:3–13**. David wanted to show kindness to someone from Saul's family, because he and Jonathan, Saul's son, had been like brothers. ³The king asked, "Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?" Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet." ⁴ "Where is he?" the king asked. Ziba answered, "He is at the **house of Makir** son of Ammiel in Lo Debar." ⁵ So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. ⁶ When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "Your servant," he replied. ⁷ "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table." ⁸ Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" ⁹ Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. ¹⁰ You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table." (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.) ¹¹ Then Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's

sons. ¹² Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth. ¹³ And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table, and he was crippled in both feet.

Had anyone been kind to the young man who spent his first years in the palace, then spent the rest of his life hiding in Lo Debar? Yes. Makir.

Lo Debar means “place of no pasture.” This lost sheep was found by David, the shepherd king, honoring the covenant he had made years before with Jonathan. What did King David give to Mephibosheth? Kindness, the land of his grandfather, servants to farm for him, and a permanent spot to eat at the king's table. That gave him hope for the future, a home, security, a place to belong.

Have you ever felt summoned by our King to leave a place of no pasture? Maybe it was a place of hopelessness, depression, shame or fear. Sheep find rest, nourishment and safety in the pasture with their shepherd — did you lack that in your Lo Debar? How have you felt God's grace during the journey out? Answers may include God's peace to replace anxiety; God's strength when we felt weak; shame replaced by God's righteousness; freedom from fear through new trust in the Lord; deliverance from an abusive situation; a word from the Scriptures that gave a bit of light during a time of depression; hard-won release from addiction; etc.

How did God's grace change your perspective? Discuss the importance of receiving God's grace in the Word of God and Sacraments. He can transform our minds so we better understand our reality. He can lead us out of danger and into a safe pasture, spiritually if not physically. We might see with the eyes of our heart. We learn to rely on Him alone and love Him above all.

See **John 10:9** for our Shepherd's promise to His sheep:

“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture.”

We are invited to eat at the King's Table, and our future is redeemed, too! Like Mephibosheth, we might not feel worthy. Remember, the invitation comes through God's Word where we read of the Lord's love, covenant, and promise; we are worthy because of His sacrifice. King David honored Mephibosheth like a son. Likewise, we inherit a share in the kingdom and a place at the table because our King chose to honor us as His daughters. Need proof? See **Isaiah 61:8b**; **John 3:16**; **John 15:16**; and **Ephesians 1:4–6** for starters.

Isaiah 61:8b In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an **everlasting covenant** with them.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him shall not perish** but have eternal life.

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but **I chose you and appointed you** to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Ephesians 1:4-6 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be **adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ**, in accordance with his pleasure and will - to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Since we last read of Mephibosheth, King David had a lot of family drama, was betrayed by his son, left Jerusalem, and now returned triumphant. Let's read about his return in **2 Samuel 19:24–30**.

24 Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. 25 When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?" 26 He said, "My lord the king, since I your servant am lame, I said, 'I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king.' But Ziba my servant betrayed me. 27 And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king. My lord the king is like an angel of God; so do whatever pleases you. 28 All my grandfather's descendants deserved nothing but death from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who sat at your table. So what right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?" 29 The king said to him, "Why say more? I order you and Ziba to divide the fields." 30 Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him take everything, now that my lord the king has arrived home safely."

Can you see a bit into Mephibosheth's heart? He remained true to the king as best he could.

He remained humble and grateful. His focus was solely on his king, and not what the king could do for him. King David had given him a new reality. When we change our focus, the Lord changes how we see our scars. God redeems that scar and it takes on meaning beyond what we can see. The Lord can bring great triumph through pain and scars. He can even turn them into grace-filled beauty marks!

Let's look now at Mary and Martha, the sisters with freshly scarred hearts at the death of their brother. A little while after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the sisters threw a party for Jesus. Please read **John 12:1–11**.

1Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5"Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages. " 6He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. 7"Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." 9Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.

Martha was serving, as usual. Lazarus was at the table with Jesus. What was Mary doing? Worshiping the Lord. She poured perfume at His feet and wiped His precious feet with her hair.

The sisters were responding with joy to their Savior. Despite the testing of their faith and the uncertainty of their safety as supporters of Christ, their beauty-marked hearts showed through. Martha's servant heart and generous hospitality were gifts to those at

the dinner. Mary saw with the eyes of her heart and gifted her Lord with expensive perfume. How much did that anointing cost her? A year's wages.

If you had a year's wage to spend on the Lord, what would you do? Answers will vary.

Beyond the financial cost, the whole party heard their beloved Jesus say, "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." Oh, the heartbreak ... Jesus speaking of His death again. How could it be so soon? Wounded hearts and wonder-filled hearts followed this Christ, in search of hope, healing, redemption, resurrection, lasting peace, and true love. Just like us. Just like generations after us. What are you hoping for in Christ? Answers will vary.

Mary and Martha were courageous in faith and action. Despite their emotional scars, they focused solely on their King. They were living that moment with Christ, not fearful of the future. Each in her own way was powered by the Spirit to live for Christ. Do you know someone empowered by the Spirit who has triumphed through Christ and lives beyond her scars? Answers will vary.

You probably know **Philippians 4:4** by heart.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Your heart may even have wrestled with it. Perhaps Mary and Martha had learned to rejoice always. Rejoicing in the Lord keeps our hearts open and makes our connection with Him solid. How can rejoicing in the Lord help us heal? When we focus on Jesus, we don't get self-absorbed and we don't focus on our problems. We can be thankful and joyful knowing the Savior, no matter our circumstances. Jesus heals our souls, even if our bodies are full of scars.

Next to Jesus, Paul could be the epitome of scars being turned into victorious beauty marks. He felt unworthy, like Mephibosheth, and driven to serve, like Mary and Martha. Paul was fully surrendered to his King. We could read much of the New Testament to see examples of Paul receiving injuries and scars, physical, mental and emotional. But he sums it up in his letter to the Corinthians. Please read **2 Corinthians 12:7–10**.

⁷To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

What did he delight in and why? Weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions, difficulties, because during those he received God's power to live.

He accepted every challenge, trusting that the scars would be turned into something powerful. He focused unwaveringly on his Savior, and not on his limitations or hardships. What happens if we focus on our limitations? Or let fear limit our future?

When our focus is not on Christ, our limitations and fears shape our future. We want His power to fill us so we can accomplish His will, for His glory.

We know the Lord will redeem our scars with His scars. Nothing is ever wasted when we pour it out at His holy feet. May our beauty marks bring Him glory!

Closing Prayer: Please ask a volunteer to read **Psalm 103:1–12**. Finish up with a “Thank You, Lord! Amen!”

Psalm 103:1-12

Praise the LORD, O my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
² Praise the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
⁶ The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.
⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Closing Hymn: Sing or say together verses 1,2,4 of “How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds” (*LSB* #524; *LW* #279; *TLH* #364 1,2,5).

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